

# Municipal Solid Waste Management in Maine

## Overview

### State Waste Management Policies

- Maine has a solid waste management hierarchy that gives preference to waste reduction, reuse and recycling over waste-to-energy and landfilling.
- Municipalities are responsible for providing solid waste disposal services for domestic and commercial solid waste generated within the municipality.
- The State's ban on the development of new commercial solid waste disposal facilities continues.

### State Waste Management Programs

- The Waste Management & Recycling Program within the State Planning Office furnishes technical and financial assistance to municipalities, collects and manages municipal solid waste management program data and is responsible for providing statewide disposal capacity. Through a biennial review of municipal solid waste (MSW) generation and disposal capacity, the State Planning Office monitors and tracks available disposal capacity statewide.
- The Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management, is responsible for licensing, compliance, enforcement, technical assistance, education/outreach, site inspection, and complaint response related to solid waste facilities and activities. Technical services include engineering and geology reviews of license applications, corrective actions, and monitoring programs and review of data.

### Waste Generation and Toxics Reduction

- Maine residents, businesses, and visitors generated 2,019,998 tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in 2003, a nine percent increase from 2001 when 1,844,059 tons of MSW were produced.
- Since 1999, much effort has been placed on reducing the toxicity of Maine's waste stream. Disposal bans have been placed on certain products containing hazardous materials. A regional household hazardous waste (HHW) collection center is under construction in Lewiston and over 100 communities will participate in an HHW collection event this year. Manufacturers are also being made responsible for taking back products, such as computer monitors and television sets, which may contain hazardous components.

### Recycling

- Over 98 percent of Maine's population has access to a publicly supported recycling program. Many public solid waste management facilities also offer composting for leaf and yard debris.
- The state-wide 2003 recycling rate was calculated to be 35.5%, a decrease from the 2001 recycling rate of 37.3%. A major factor in this decline, even though the tonnage recycled was 717,583 tons, a 30,000 ton increase from 2001, was that the increase in overall municipal solid waste generation exceeded the increase reflected in the efforts of recycling programs.

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## Disposal

- There are four Waste-to-Energy facilities which received 872,306 tons of MSW in 2003, of which 228,638 tons or 26% of that total were from out of state. In 2001, these facilities received 844,948 tons of MSW, of which 198,920 tons were from out of state sources. Of the total tonnage delivered to these facilities, 370,478 tons or 42% of the total were eventually landfilled, either as bypass or residues from incineration, or recycled. Solid waste actually incinerated in 2003 was 501,828 tons.
- The eight municipally owned and operated MSW landfills and 2 commercial landfills in 2003 received 861,912 tons of MSW, including residues from waste-to-energy facilities; an increase of approximately 160,000 tons from 2001. Out of state waste constituted 218,319 tons or approximately 25% of the total tons landfilled.
- 156,994 tons of Maine's MSW were exported for disposal in 2003, an increase from the 77,765 tons exported in 2001. In 2003, 446,958 tons of MSW were imported, a 100% increase over the tonnage imported in 2001.
- Constitutionally, government may restrict acceptance of out-of-state generated waste at a disposal facility they own.
- Combined capacities of municipal and commercial landfills provide an estimated 5 to 6 years of remaining landfill capacity. This does not include capacity at the West Old Town Landfill.

## Current activities

- The Task Force that Commissioner Gallagher is chairing, which is reviewing issues related to the Maine Energy Recovery Company, has met three times. Both Biddeford and Saco are seeking voter approval in November to respectively commit up to 10 million dollars to buy the incinerator. An additional 8 million dollars are needed to reach the sale price, for which the communities are seeking assistance from both the State and Federal Governments. A fourth meeting is scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The initiation of services agreed to between the City of Lewiston and Casella, for Casella's operation of the City's landfill, has been delayed until issues identified by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Attorney General's office have been addressed.
- Pine Tree landfill in Hampden, owned by Casella, sought a license amendment to develop an additional 2.5 million cubic yards of disposal capacity but DEP recently refused to process the initial application for this additional disposal capacity, citing technical concerns and the need for further review.
- The license amendment requested for the West Old Town Landfill was approved by the DEP. That decision was appealed to the Board of Environmental Protection and upheld, but has been appealed to Superior Court and is currently in the court system. Both DEP and SPO are working with the AG's office to ensure that state interests are fully represented. That license amendment gives Maine sufficient capacity to meet anticipated state needs for an estimated 10 to 15 years, during which time a request will be submitted to DEP to develop additional capacity there.